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SIERRA CLUB BULLETIN

September
1949



Miscellany

We are still hoping that corrections for the new edition of the *Member's Handbook* will soon be forthcoming. Our only contributor so far is Phil Bernays, who has put us right about the date of formation of the Southern California Chapter.

One member of long standing thought our announcement of the new *Handbook* carried some discrimination in it; but as Miss Virginia Ferguson has pointed out to this member, in November 1947 "a sufficient number was printed to allow sending each new member a copy upon election to membership; that supply is running low, and now it is proposed to reprint it, with some revisions, in order to continue sending a handbook to each new member immediately after election to membership. As the old members already have a copy, probably very few will wish a copy of the new edition, but if they do, it is planned to charge \$1. Funds for this reprinting of the *Handbook* are provided by the new members' initiation fees."

If you wish a copy of the revised edition, please don't expect delivery until after January 1. We will accept corrections, however, instantly.

Climber's Guide writers, please note. The first day of autumn is already past, and we're anxious to see the results of your summer's labors in manuscript form. Those of you who believe you will need air-photo coverage to supplement your ground observations should let us know precisely what areas are needed. Then we'll see if coverage exists. Those who have offered services but have not yet been put to work should not be dismayed. There is still much editorial work to be done, about which you should soon hear more.

A few copies of the 128-page preliminary edition of the *Climber's Guide to the High Sierra*, published July 1, are available at \$2 at the club office.

It is now time, also, to announce a first call for corrections to Starr's *Guide to the John Muir Trail and High Sierra Region*.

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Photo credits. Cover, Precipice Lake, Sequoia National Park. By William Hail. Pages 4-6, by Dick Shideler, except lower photo on page 5, by Robert C. Frampton.	

THE SIERRA CLUB, founded in 1892, has devoted itself to the study and protection of national scenic resources, particularly those of the mountain regions of the Pacific Coast. Since these resources receive best protection from those who know them well, the club has long conducted educational activities, under the committees listed below, to make them known. Participation is invited in the program to preserve wilderness, wildlife, forests, and streams.

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Published monthly except August by the Sierra Club, 2061 Center Street, Berkeley 4, California. Annual dues are \$6 (first year \$12), of which \$1 (nonmembers, \$2) is for subscription to the *Bulletin*. Entered as second class matter at Post Office, Berkeley, under Act of March 3, 1879. Contributions and changes of address should go to address above; communications on matters of club policy should be addressed to the Secretary, 1050 Mills Tower, San Francisco 4.



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Sierra Club Bulletin

VOLUME 34

SEPTEMBER, 1949

NUMBER 8

... TO EXPLORE, ENJOY, AND PROTECT THE NATURAL MOUNTAIN SCENE ...

For the September Record

Progress and Wild Areas

"You cannot stop progress," we are frequently told when discussing the need of action to preserve some Wilderness Areas or one of the few remaining unspoiled parts of the national parks.

Progress has many connotations; but if we are to use the dictionary sense, "to advance toward something better," we are hardly making progress when we allow bigger and better roads or tramways to be built in our remaining wilderness. Such action does not make a wildland and its natural features any better. It is retrogression, on a one-way road.

While we seem nationally to be moving toward a real appreciation of the value of our wild areas, the feeling on this score is not yet strong enough to meet current inroads proposed by various promotion groups. One of the most threatening of these groups in California today is behind the Winter Park Authority. This group plans, in the Mount San Jacinto Wild Area, to devise for itself a profitable development in a region belonging to the people of the United States—a region which, if left alone, is destined soon to become one of the most priceless assets of all the natural attractions of Southern California, where already too few remain.

"But if you want to keep your wild areas," explains our friend Bill Mendenhall, Supervisor of the Angeles Forest, "you have to show more use of them by your outdoor people, who must pass the word about their attractions and advantages to a general public sufficiently nu-

merous to render powerful support when needed."

This is good advice. Even if it is already known to many wilderness conservationists, still there is not yet enough progress toward a plan for wide acceptance of the value of wild-land areas.

The Sierra Club, and especially its Conservation Committee, is doing much to develop this appreciation. It has organized trips into wilderness, sponsored public lectures and visual education for school children and adults, and has coöperated with other national conservation organizations devoted to the same interests. It has also scheduled a series of articles on wild-land preservation; and we were planning to begin with the problem of Mount San Jacinto when along came a fine article on that very subject by one of the leading Sierra Club conservation workers of Southern California, Joe R. Momyer, of the Riverside Chapter. We gladly let his article, which follows, speak for itself.

ARTHUR H. BLAKE

Glacier View Dam Again

Any premature victory celebrations have been quieted by the news that there is now a bill before Congress authorizing construction of the Glacier View Dam in Glacier National Park. The bill which would upset the agreement between Park Service, Reclamation, and Army Engineers not to build the dam is H.R. 6153, by Mike Mansfield, and is now before the House Committee on Public Works. Members are urged to voice their opposition.

Wilderness Recreation for a Metropolitan Area

BY JOE R. MOMYER

FEW PEOPLE REALIZE that within four hours of downtown Los Angeles by car and on foot one can be in a beautiful and unspoiled mountain wilderness into which one may hike or ride horseback and enjoy alpine scenery and environment. This very proximity to a major metropolitan area gives real value to the Mount San Jacinto State Park and Wild Area.

In an area rivaled only by Florida for literally hundreds of fine beaches with added mountain, desert, and valley resorts and clubs, the San Jacinto region has an irreplaceable value. For Southern California can provide very little of the type of wilderness experience San Jacinto offers to mountain lovers. The mountains are ideally situated, in the center of the six southern counties, to provide this rare form of recreation for those who wish it among the large and rapidly growing population.

All the official Wild Areas in Southern California put together cover less area than Yosemite National Park. The combined San Jacinto State Park and Forest Service Wild Area account for about one fourth of all the acreage reserved in these wild areas, yet it equals only a half of one per cent of the land area in the six southern counties. The State Park alone, which includes the most beautiful high portion of the San Jacinto Mountains, accounts for fully one half of the fine alpine country available in the south, yet it represents only .00048 per cent of the land area of the six southern counties.

BUT what does wilderness recreation mean?" one is asked. That is a fair question and a hard one to answer. It means the anticipation and fun of planning a trip, checking sleeping bags and knapsacks, studying maps, choosing lightweight foods to provide nourishment without excess weight, planning the itinerary and learning where good sleeping spots, water, and firewood will be—above all, the gathering together of a group of friends,

kindred spirits, who sense that the degree of appreciation of a grand mountain scene is based largely on the extent to which it is earned, that one must *participate* in an experience, not merely be a passive spectator.

"Wilderness experience on San Jacinto," in terms of an individual hiker, means sticking one's nose out of a warm sleeping bag into the cool mountain morning, the delicious aroma of bacon frying over a wood fire. It means shouldering a not-too-heavy pack and swinging light-heartedly up the forest trail through alders, oaks, and cottonwood; then gradually into incense cedar, juniper, big-cone spruce, white fir, and the grand straight pines—ponderosa, Jeffrey, sugar and Coulter. It means gradually climbing the switchbacks of the Devil's Slide trail, seeing the gentle, forested valley lying cupped below, with



Windswept trees on an upland ridge of Mount San Jacinto.

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an occasional wisp of smoke to mark the beginning of the day in some cabin beneath the trees, wondering at the great granite upthrust of Tahquitz Rock and rugged Tahquitz Peak.

Crossing the saddle at the top of the



View of the desert from Cornell Peak.

stiff climb brings one to another, more remote, more peaceful world. There are no signs of man or his works here except the well-worn foot trail. An occasional disturbed chipmunk or curious gray squirrel races up a tree, scolding at the intrusion; and a flash of movement betrays a startled lizard. By now the sun is warm and one sinks gratefully onto a grassy bank beside a stream of mountain water that crosses the trail at a green cienaga, perhaps occasionally to see a graceful deer and her fawn step into the open on the far side of the meadow.

Then pack on the shoulders again—a pack, lightened somewhat now as a result of trailside snacks, and on toward the summit of the great mountain. The faint squeaking of the leather straps on the knapsack and the occasional shrilling of a cricket are in good harmony in the pine-scented air, while the greenness of the trees and shrubs is brightened by azaleas.

Eventually, after pleasant sun-drenched miles of trail, broken by occasional other peaceful rests on shady, pine-needle covered hillsides, one finally is on the summit, and knows the climber's exhilaration, that must be experienced to be understood.

One gazes on the vastness of mountain



San Jacinto in January, due west from an altitude of 10,500 feet. Round Valley at extreme right.

ranges and the sweep of the desert below. He feels his perspective improve as he stands there.

The trip down may be made the same day; or one may sleep out under the pines. On the down trail one crosses lovely meadows, stops to look at Hidden Lake (dry this year), and hikes for long stretches, in Tahquitz Valley, through ferns reaching shoulder-high. Back at the foot of the trail, the car cushions feel feather-soft, and the whole body is deliciously tired with a wholesome fatigue. An invigorating bath and hot food perform miracles, however, and soon thoughts are racing to plans for another trip and to memories of peaceful sunlit meadows remote from daily tensions and strains. As Thoreau said over 90 years ago: "Our life would stagnate if it were not for the unexplored forests and meadows which surround it. We need the tonic of the wilderness. We can never have enough of nature. We must be refreshed by the sight of the inexhaustible vigor . . . of the wilderness with its living and decaying trees."

IN considering the recreational values of such an area, the experiences of the in-

dividual hiker must be multiplied by the thousands of people who use the area in its present form each year. There are fifty organized groups (Boy and Girl Scouts, YMCA and YWCA groups, and so on) using campsites in the Idyllwild area. Annually, approximately 16,000 people now use the area for an average of a day and a half each—approximately 24,000 man days per year. Surely this is a valid utilization of great importance to Southern California. True, it is not a mass utilization. Nevertheless, a distinctive and rare bit of mountain wilderness should be entitled to as much consideration and protection as a unique bit of desert, a richly carved stretch of beach, a museum, or a great library. Each serves a portion of the public; each fills a need, and neither should squeeze out the other.

We need to think in terms of permanent recreational values for the people who *live* in Southern California rather than in terms of added superficial attractions to bring a greater flood of transient tourists through the state. If we make Southern California a desirable place in which to live, enough tourists will still visit us and many of them will stay to become permanent residents.



DESERT VIEW

"I have never seen the trail crew, on the way to and from work, fail to turn out some 200 yards and walk over to look out upon the desert a few minutes."

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Federation Holds Annual Convention

Recently we were amazed to hear that the chairman of one of the chapters of the Sierra Club had never heard of the Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs, but after a little reflection we concluded that it was mostly our own fault for not doing a little advertising. The Federation has just held its 18th annual convention, this time at Snoqualmie Pass, Washington, with the Mountaineers and Washington Alpine Club as co-hosts. On the Labor Day week end, 1950, the Sierra Club is to be host for the Federation's convention at Clair Tappaan Lodge, so it is high time we posted our chapter chairmen and their constituents on the aims, functions, and background of the Federation.

The Federation was formed in 1932 to bring together the outdoor clubs of the west, to promote better understanding of their problems, to exchange information on mountaineering activities and to co-operate in behalf of conservation of natural resources. In the intervening years, it has grown to include twenty-nine clubs in Washington, Utah, Oregon, and California. It has set up a system of associate memberships which permits individuals to belong to the Federation, and it issues a bulletin, the *Western Outdoor Quarterly*, which is distributed to all members. This is no super organization blanketing all its member clubs, but it resembles, rather, a trade association formed as a common meeting ground for the discussion of common problems.

At the Snoqualmie Pass Convention, the Mountaineers described an outstanding orientation program which they have instituted for their new members. The possibilities of its application to the Sierra Club are good and the feasibility of adopting such a program will be explored. The Mountaineers also outlined their comprehensive training program for embryo rock climbers. Their climbing classes include both school room and field work, covering map reading, first aid, safety, rock- and snow-climbing technique. Their program has not only stimulated interest in climb-

ing but it has resulted in a significant decrease in accidents.

At the Federation's business meeting the officers for 1949-50 were elected, three additional clubs were admitted to membership, and resolutions concerning important conservation matters were passed to guide the new officers on conservation policy in the coming year.

Officers for 1949-50 are:

President, Harry C. James, The Trailfinders
Secretary, Olga Madsen, California Alpine Club

Treasurer, Melvin P. Becker, Trails Club of Oregon

Quarterly Editor, Rosella McCune, Trails Club of Oregon

Vice-President for Washington, C. G. Morrison

Vice-President for Utah, O'Dell Peterson

Vice-President for Oregon, Frank Site

Vice-President for California, John R. Barnard; *Deputy Vice-President for California*, Joe Momyer.

The three new clubs are the Hood River Cragrats of Oregon, reinstated after inactivity during the war; the Rimrock Mountaineers of Coulee Dam, Washington; and the Marin Conservation League, guardians of some of the best hiking country in the San Francisco Bay Area.

From the standpoint of the Sierra Club, the most important of the fourteen resolutions passed are as follows:

National Park Road Standards

WHEREAS, it is apparent that areas in our national parks can become and are becoming so crowded as to lead to damage to the natural scene and impairment of its inspirational atmosphere and

WHEREAS, the presence of too many people in a park can lead to many developments that are essentially urban and foreign to the original park scene, which developments lead to further overcrowding and

WHEREAS, one of the factors which determine the rate and extent of overcrowding and overdevelopment of a park is the system of roads leading to and within it; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED by the Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs that the following be adopted as our policy in regard to national park standards:

1. That roads within the parks be held strictly to such standards as are consistent with traffic requirements, keeping in mind that roads within parks have the dual purpose of circulating traffic for the best views of the scenic attractions and as avenues of ingress and egress.

2. That before new roads are built within the parks or old roads radically altered a careful reappraisal be made to determine the actual minimal requirements with respect to grades, radius of curves, and width of roads, further mindful that high standard roads are the most costly to taxpayers, the most immediately damaging to the park scene, the most unsafe for tourist travel and the least satisfactory for leisurely contemplation of the beauty that our national parks can offer.

Mount San Jacinto Tramway

WHEREAS, the Mount San Jacinto Forest Service Wild Area and State Park now have their wilderness status gravely threatened by the proposed construction of a tramway from Palm Springs to the upper reaches of the mountain, through lands composing both areas, and

WHEREAS, such land in the State Park was acquired from the Forest Service Wild Area by land exchange with a pledge by the State Park Commission that it would permanently maintain the former Federal lands in their primitive condition, and

WHEREAS, the California State Legislature violated this agreement in enacting a Winter Park Authority Bill, giving a private agency the right to construct the tramway and terminal facilities on the lands, and

WHEREAS, this violation establishes a precedent by which lands in other primitive and wilderness areas may be turned over for private exploitation and may be used to penetrate such areas with the design of weakening the status of adjacent sections so that eventually an entire area may have its wild area status progressively destroyed; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs express strong disapproval of the means whereby the Mount San Jacinto Wild Area is threatened with violation by the construction of the proposed tramway, and that copies of the resolution be sent to the Governor of the State of California, the Chairman of the State Park Commission and the Chief Forester of the United States, and

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED, that the Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs request the Chief Forester and the Regional Forester to hold the

customary public hearing to consider the application of the Winter Park Authority to have the tramway cross any forest service lands in the remaining Mount San Jacinto Wild Area and that the Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs be given the opportunity to appear at such a hearing; that in any such future transfer the U. S. Forest Service take proper legal steps to assure the permanent status of such lands.

Air Space Reservations

WHEREAS, airplanes and helicopters constitute a growing threat to the wilderness through their ability to transport men and supplies into wilderness areas, and

WHEREAS, low flight over national parks and monuments destroys the feeling of solitude in the remote parts of those areas, now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs support the efforts to establish air space reservations over wilderness and wild areas, as designated by the U. S. Forest Service, and further

BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Park Service be urged to review its air space regulations in order that there may be uniformity of these regulations in National Park Service and U. S. Forest Service areas.

Acquisition of Private Lands in National Parks and Monuments

WHEREAS, private land holdings in national parks and national monuments constitute a serious administrative problem in these areas, and

WHEREAS, the acquisition of many, if not all, of these private holdings is essential to the proper utilization of the scenic and recreational possibilities of such national parks and national monuments, and

WHEREAS, the states and counties in which these national parks and national monuments are located are deprived of revenue that they would otherwise receive from taxes on property included in national parks and national monuments; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs support S. 728 and H.R. 1389 and recommend to the member clubs that all possible steps be taken to insure prompt and favorable action on these proposed measures.

Of special interest to Sierra Club members, the Federation also voted full support to the Butano and Calaveras state-park proposals.
JOHN R. BARNARD

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